



Baltimore City Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Prevention Wednesday” Launches with Call to Wash Hands

Baltimore, MD (August 29, 2006) – On Wednesday, August 30, the Baltimore City Health Department will kick off an initiative called “Prevention Wednesday,” a new public information campaign to promote healthy living, prevent disease and improve community health.

Health Commissioner, Dr. Joshua Sharfstein will hold a press conference at 11 am on August 30 at Healthy Start, 1622 N. Carey Street to discuss the many benefits of proper handwashing in preventing infectious disease.

The goal of the Health Department’s “Prevention Wednesday” is to deliver timely prevention information to a broad public audience by linking a frequently overlooked health topic ... with a frequently overlooked day of the week.

On occasional Wednesdays throughout the year, the Health Department will highlight a particular activity where action today can prevent illness tomorrow.

For its inaugural event, the Health Department is choosing a message with particular relevance for families with children returning this week to school. Colds, stomach flu, ear infections, and pink eye, are highly contagious and often result in absenteeism, but parents can help protect themselves and their children with the following important prevention tips:

- 1) Teach proper hand washing technique early and make it fun
- 2) Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not your hand
- 3) Keep disposable, one-use tissue within reach
- 4) Routinely sanitize high traffic surfaces, especially toilet and diapering areas
- 5) Keep a child with fever, vomiting or diarrhea at home
- 6) Make sure all children have up-to-date immunizations

Prevention Wednesday flyers will be distributed citywide at health clinics, Community Action Centers, DSS Family Investment Centers, Senior Centers, Rec Centers, and Enoch Pratt Free Libraries. All Prevention Wednesday materials will also be available for free online at <http://preventionwednesday.org>.

Schools and child care programs can obtain free hand washing posters online at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm>.

For more information on handwashing, visit Centers for Disease Control, Clean Hands Save Lives at: <http://www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/> and download the Handwashing Toolkit from School Network for Absenteeism Prevention at <http://www.itsasnap.org/snap/admin.asp>.

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